



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
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GERALD E. CONNOLLY
CHAIRMAN

September 1, 2004

The Honorable Whittington Clement
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Virginia
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219



Dear Secretary Clement:

I am writing at the request of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to provide comments to you and the members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) regarding the Location Study and Environmental Impact Statement for the widening of the Capital Beltway (I-495) from the American Legion Bridge to the Springfield Interchange. The Board reviewed this matter at its August 2, 2004, meeting and has several concerns regarding the project. In light of the Commonwealth's recent decision to move to the next stage of negotiations with Fluor Daniel on its proposal for High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, the Board would like to ensure that the Department is aware of its comments and concerns.

It was encouraging to see that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) had so drastically reduced the impacts to the surrounding communities. The two new build alternatives shown at the Public Information Meetings held on June 29 and 30, 2004, reflect the concerns raised by the Board of Supervisors and the hundreds of citizens that attended the public hearing in June 2002. Also, the consideration of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes as one of the options addresses the need to look at alternative funding sources for large projects such as this.

The Board had the following comments for your consideration:

- Access to and from the High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) (10 lane alternative) or HOT (12 lane alternative) lanes into the Tysons Corner area is important to encourage the use of HOV and accommodate improved transit service to the area. An access from the Beltway to Jones Branch Drive should be considered.

- Intermediate access points between the general purpose lanes and the HOV or HOT lanes should be considered to provide more opportunity for their use. Operational issues need to be considered to ensure safety; however, some of the safety concerns might be reduced, while still providing increased access, by only constructing ramps from the general purpose lanes to the HOV or HOT lanes.
- Detailed analysis should be provided of the traffic impacts where these additional ramps might connect from/to the Beltway and any physical impacts caused by access ramps on homes and businesses. This information should be made available to the public for review and comment during the next phase of this project.
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and the VDOT must work together to ensure that transit is an integral part of any significant improvement to the Capital Beltway.
- To make the HOV or HOT lanes part of a regional network, direct connections to the I-95/I-395 HOV facility need to be included through the construction of Phase VIII of the Springfield Interchange.
- Continued coordination with the State of Maryland regarding their proposals for the Capital Beltway is necessary to ensure compatibility and minimize possible congestion at the American Legion Bridge.
- Adequate sound walls are essential to any improvement to the Capital Beltway and must be provided in the widening project.

Connections to I-66 outside the Beltway need to be compatible with future improvements to I-66 now under study as part of the I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study so that adjacent properties are impacted only once. These improvements need to be coordinated with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's proposed redevelopment of the Dunn Loring Station.

- VDOT must study ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle access across and along the Capital Beltway to minimize the effect that the Beltway has as a barrier to these non-motorized transportation options. Pedestrian and non-motorized transportation needs should be accommodated at all existing crossings of the Beltway and connections should be made to adjacent existing and planned trails.
- In addition to the Build Alternatives, VDOT should study ways to improve capacity and safety on the Capital Beltway through the development of short and mid-term projects that could realistically be funded if the development of alternative funding for the entire project is not possible. These projects should address critical areas of the Capital Beltway including the segment between Route 50 (Arlington Boulevard) and the Dulles Toll Road.

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The Board again wants to thank VDOT for its responsiveness to the concerns of the citizens in these latest proposals. We appreciate your assistance and support in this and other critical transportation issues in Fairfax County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", is written over a horizontal line.

Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, Commonwealth Transportation Board
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Philip A. Shucet, Commissioner, Virginia
Department of Transportation
Karen J. Rae, Director, Virginia Department of
Rail and Public Transportation
Gene Hull, Acting District Administrator, Virginia
Department of Transportation
Young Ho Chang, Director, Fairfax County
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